

A Thanksgiving Matchmaking

I suppose every woman that ever was born is at heart a matchmaker, only in some of them it is latent, as the phrenologists say when they find some one that ought to be very remarkable in some line, only isn't. And old maids are no exception in this respect, unless they are soured, and I'm not sour, thank Heaven!

Being an old maid of some forty years' standing—for they tell me I showed signs of old maidishness when I was a baby—and having had this matchmaking propensity latent all that time, is it any wonder that it sprang into activity the minute I got Silas Dale's letter asking me if he might come and eat his Thanksgiving dinner with me?

Before I answered him I put on my things and took the electric to Vernon Centre and went to see Alicia Dean. I asked her if she'd take dinner with me on Thanksgiving day, and when she accepted my invitation I could actually almost see her wedding invitations, and I went home and wrote Silas that he might come.

Now if Alicia had refused, I really believe I'd have told Silas that I had a previous engagement, and then things wouldn't have happened the way they did though of course I might have hunted around among my acquaintances and found a second best match for him. And even then things wouldn't have happened as they did either. You see I'd always thought an awful sight of Silas, and when he went off West to practice law, I suppose I felt as bad as anybody did to have him go—in an old-maidish way, of course. We'd written to each other once a year, telling all the news that was interesting, and of course I knew how well he'd prospered, and how he wasn't married yet. It has always struck me as being an awful waste of good material for a likely man that would make a good husband and could give a woman a nice home, to stay single, and I hate waste. And thinking so much of Silas, I'd felt as if he wasn't living up to his opportunities off West there, and it was kind of a disappointment to me, his falling short of what he ought to be, so. But now he is coming East, I saw how I could put him in the way of making up for his past deficiencies.

Alicia Dean was and is my best friend. She's about my age, but she's a widow. Everybody knows that the reason old maids are such is because they've never had a chance to be anything else, but with widows it's different. You've seen these women with charm—the thing they describe in the newspapers. It is indescribable, and every woman must cultivate it if she expects to win a husband or keep him after he is won, but it is something no woman can cultivate if it isn't born in her. Well, Alicia had it, as near as I can figure it out. You had a feeling that if she didn't marry any marriageable man in town, it wasn't because she hadn't been asked. That's the difference between old maids and widows.

Besides having this "indescribable thing called charm"—which as a general thing I don't take much stock in—Alicia was an awful good, sensible woman. She'd had a pretty tough time with her husband, which I took it was the reason she hadn't made a second venture, but I had a feeling that Silas would find it easy to overcome all her fears and objections. I was so pleased when I thought of how happy I was going to make them both that I fairly hugged myself. There's no use talking; it's easy to see how some folks gets into the matchmaking habit. It's like strong drink and goes to the head. But of course I knew I'd got to have

a fourth one in my Thanksgiving party, for there's a crowd and I never like to be the one that isn't wanted. So after I'd got Silas and Alicia off my mind, I called up Philip Alden on the telephone. Philip is my nearest neighbor, and being a lone woman I'd thought it advisable to fix things so I could call on a good strong man in case of need, so I'd put in a telephone over to his house. I never used it much, though in winter evenings we'd often have long talks together when it got a little lonesome. He lived by himself, too. It's surprising how many men and women there are in this town that live that way; I'm going to count 'em up some day.

Philip and I were good friends, and having the telephone was a great convenience when we wanted to talk together, for it saved worrying the neighbors, and I hate to have the neighbors fretting about my affairs. Philip was another case of the waste of good material, but I never thought of trying my matchmaking hand on him, for he did not seem to have, as far as I could see, any more sentiment than a clothespin. Well, when he said he'd come over Thanksgiving day, I felt that the first part of my programme was arranged and I could give my mind to the other part.

Thanksgiving day was clear and cold, and I was glad of that. I expected Silas at about 10, and by that time I had everything ready for my company. I'm not one to get nervous about my work and I never let it drive me. My house was full of sunshine and good smells that day. In the kitchen there was the flavor of sage and onions and cooking meat. I had a pudding baking in the northeast corner of my oven, a spare-rib in the southeast corner, and in front of them two fowls were roasting, for I knew Silas preferred chicken to turkey, and besides, turkey was extra dear at that time. In the dining room the table was all set, with my best table cloth that shone like satin, and some of Grandmother's old dishes and her thin silver spoons. There was the smell of celery there. Then in the sitting room I had a fire in the open fireplace. I'd had Philip come over and put in the biggest backlog he could get in, and the fire I'd started made the room warm and cheerful. My old "calico" cat sat purring on the arm of my favorite chair. The canary in one south window sang softly. There was holly and ground pine about the room, and the hemlock I'd gone and got that morning smelled sweet, as did the heliotrope in the other south window.

Well, it wasn't long before I saw Silas coming, and I went to the door to meet him. He'd changed some, and I had too, I suppose, but after we'd shaken hands and had come in and sat down by the fire we forgot all about that. It did seem good to see him again, we both talked fast, as we used to do. Then, pretty soon, I saw Alicia coming. I was glad, for I'd got to go to the kitchen pretty soon, and wanted to leave them alone some. She looked awfully pretty when she came in. Her cheeks were pink, but her nose never turns red the way mine does in cold weather. I got my two visitors to talking and then I went off and left them, and when I got back Philip was just knocking at the door. We four sat together for some time, till I had to go and get the dinner on the table. It made me uneasy to leave Philip there making the third that's a crowd, and besides I needed some one to help me a little. So I called to him. A minute later who should come walking out but Silas.

"I called Philip," I said, "I wanted him to help me a little."

"Did you?" he said. "I must have misunderstood. But I can help you just as well as he can."

He couldn't, but I saw he was determined to stay, and he was so good-natured and cheerful about hindering me that I couldn't send him back into the other room. So I hurried things on the table and called Philip and Alicia out to sit down to dinner.

It was a great success in every way, if I do say it. The chicken—I'd raised them myself—were tender, and the rib roast was delicious. The gravies and stuffings were just right, and the onions and squash and turnip and potatoes were cooked and seasoned as they ought to be. As for the pudding and pies and the nuts and fruit and coffee, they were as good as I ever saw. And how those men did eat! It really almost scared me, but after all it wasn't to be wondered at. There was Philip had been living on his own cooking—if such it could be called—and Silas for years had been eating nobody knows what outlandish things 'way off West there—sauerkraut and Rokefort cheese and all such horrors, most likely. We were very sociable and jolly, and I'm ashamed to say how long we sat there talking after we got through eating, but finally we sent the men off for a walk, and Alicia and I cleared away and did up the dishes. When we got together again in the sitting room, I racked my brain to think how I could get Philip and myself out of the way so as to give my matchmaking scheme a chance to work. The best I could do for an excuse was feeding the hens, so I said, as I got up and went out of the room, "come, Philip, and look at my hens; there's one of them that acts a little queer, and I'd like to know what you think of her."

I heard some one coming, but when I stepped out of the door and looked around, there was Silas. He'd taken my shawl down from the peg behind the door, and he put it around me. "Philip can diagnose your hen's disease at any time," he said, "but I don't have a chance to talk with you every day."

Then he tucked my arm in his and began walking me back and forth between the rows of rhubarb plants on one side of the yard and the currant and gooseberry bushes on the other.

"Do you suppose you could make up your mind to leave New England and go out West to live?" asked Silas.

"Well," I said, "I can generally make up my mind to most anything if I have to—and be contented too—but I don't see any call for me to do that."

"There is a call," said Silas. "In all the time I've been away, Mehitable," he said, "I've often thought of getting a wife, but somehow you have always come between me and the women of my acquaintance out there, and they have suffered by comparison. So I came to see if I could persuade you to go back with me as my wife."

My impulse was to say he could, but my common sense and good judgment made me say instead, "You are very kind, Silas, but I think you are making a mistake. You must have been idealizing me all these years. I've grown old, and I'm not and never was handsome. We've had a very pleasant day together, and don't you think it is the part of wisdom for you to go back and marry some one you like and have not idealized?"

"No, I don't," he answered promptly. "I think it is the part of wisdom for us to have this day as a starting point and have pleasant days together as long as we both shall live."

Well, I never did such a thing before, but I forgot to feed my hens that night. But then, I never had got engaged before, either, so perhaps it wasn't to be wondered at.

It was growing cold, and just as the sun sank from sight we went back into the sitting room. And what do you think! we found another engaged couple there.

We sat in the twilight, Alicia and Philip on one side of the fire and Silas and I on the other. I presume

they held each other's hands and I suppose they were as happy as we were, though that doesn't seem hardly possible.

So that is how I came out on my Thanksgiving matchmaking. I gave it up then and there, for when you've made your plans and worked hard to carry them out, and they go exactly opposite to what you expect, it is rather upsetting. Moreover, when you are terribly thankful that your plans didn't come out the way you wanted them to, it is still more upsetting. I am a firm believer in giving thanks—every day in the year—but as for matchmaking, I don't want anything whatever to do with it.—Rural New Yorker.

Last Battle of the Revolution.

It may be of interest to the boys and girls of today to know where the last battle of the Revolution was fought. It was at the foot of Murray shreet, New York City not far from the Hudson River.

On the morning of November 25, 1783, when the British troops were to evacuate the city of New York and leave America independent, Mrs. Day unfurled her country's flag over her dwelling. The British claimed the right to hold possession of the city until noon of that day. Cunningham, the notorious British provost marshal, was informed of this impudent display of the "rebel banner" in the presence of the British troops, and sent a sergeant to order it to be taken down. Mrs. Day refused compliance.

At about nine o'clock in the morning, while Mrs. Day was quietly sweeping in front of her house, a burly, red-faced British officer in full uniform, with a powdered wig, walked rapidly down the street. He halted before Mrs. Day, and roughly inquired:

"Who hoisted that rebel flag?"

Mrs. Day, looking the angry officer full in the face said: "I raised that flag."

"Pull it down!" roared the Briton.

"I shall not do it," said Mrs. Day.

"You don't know who I am," angrily growled the officer.

"Yes, I do," said the courageous woman.

The officer seized the halyards, and attempted to pull down the flag, when Mrs. Day flew at him with her broom, and beat him so severely over the head that she knocked off his hat, and made the powder fly from his wig. He stormed and swore and tugged in vain at the halyards, for they were tangled, and Mrs. Day applied her broomstick so vigorously that the blustering provost marshal was finally compelled to beat a hasty retreat, leaving the American flag floating in triumph over the well-defended "Day Castle."

This was the last battle between British and American in the old war for independence.—Harper's Young Folks.

Mr. McCutcheon's Experience.

We have, at different times, heard considerable about Arizona oranges. Unless the report of the observations of Mr. McCutcheon, as narrated by the Orange County Reporter, are greatly exaggerated the fruit from territory is not likely to become a serious rival of that from Florida.

Mr. Robert McCutcheon, who usually spends his winters in Orlando, thought he would try Arizona and New Mexico last winter, for a change. But he returns to Orlando fully satisfied that it cannot be beat as a winter home. Mr. McCutcheon's experience in tree planting in that county is fetching.

He says: "They have to blast a big hole in the rocks with dynamite and cart a few loads of clay from some distant point in which to place the tree. Then they bore a well several hundred feet deep in the rock and erect a tank, from which to draw the water to irrigate the tree every day, and then finally the roots of the tree crowd the hole, and the thing dies anyhow."